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For Immediate Release

NASPAA and the Batten School Announce Global Winners of the 2020 Student Simulation Competition

Today, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) and the University of Virginia Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy announced the winners of the 2020 NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition—the largest-ever student simulation competition in higher education.

There were 64 teams competing at seven sites around the globe, devising and implementing public transport policies in order to create improved sustainability strategies for their virtual cities.

Congratulations to the First Place Global Winners of the 2020 NASPAA-Batten Simulation!:

- **Dontavious Waller:** Georgia Southern University
- **Elizabeth Carter**: University of Georgia
- **Kathryn Charpin:** The George Washington University
- **Leah Roach:** Regent University
- **Rudolf-Victor de Leon Dinglas:** University of Maryland Baltimore County

This team of five students, each representing their home university, competed at the **George Mason University Schar School of Policy and Government.**

They will receive an opportunity to present to the United Nations Association U.S.A. (UNA-USA) members on the topic of sustainable cities and communities via Webcast, a virtual networking session with the U.S. Youth Observer to the United Nations, a listing on UNA-USA's website as the Global Competition Winning Team, and finally a generous cash prize offered by NASPAA.

"The results of this year's student simulation competition shout, 'this is the future of public service,' according to NASPAA Executive Director Laurel McFarland. "These winning teams proved that MPA/MPP students can

do almost anything—analyze problems, apply systems thinking, collaborate successfully with brand new colleagues, write clearly and evidentiarily, present cogently, and imagine a better tomorrow. The future of public service is in good hands with these students, and no matter what challenges we may be facing globally at the moment, they will be contributing to a brighter future of healthy and sustainable cities."

This year's competition connected nearly 350 students from 114 universities in 46 countries through computer-based simulated game play at seven global host sites. The simulation, developed by experts at the Center for Leadership Simulation and Gaming (CLSG) and backed by extensive real-world data, placed competing students in leadership roles within a fast-paced environment where they worked together to build sustainable public transit infrastructure in their city.

This year's [Global Super Judges](#) were especially impressed by student performance. It was a difficult process to identify a winner. According to Dana Harsell, associate professor of the Master of Public Administration program at the University of North Dakota, *"It was inspiring to watch these future public administration leaders think 'outside the box' when considering the best set of policy initiatives to promote the long-term health and sustainability of their cities."* Harsell has utilized several simulations developed by CLSG, such as the ones on pandemic crisis management and global migration policy, in both his campus-based and online classes.

Felipe Targa, Senior Urban Transport Specialist at the World Bank, says *"Dominant trends in unsustainable and inequitable land use and transportation planning can be corrected with the right policy decisions; simulation-based learning is a great tool for these future policy makers to understand the tradeoffs and the multisectoral nature of these decisions in real-life settings."* Felipe has 20 years of experience working in the public sector and is an advocate for bicycle urbanism, placemaking and human-scale cities.

Claudia Adriazola-Steil, Director of Health and Road Safety at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, was also very impressed by the positive thinking demonstrated by all the presenting teams. She is *"very optimistic about the future generation of those who contribute to sustainability and public service."* Claudia has worked in the transport sector for almost 20 years. In her current role at the WRI Ross Center, she prioritizes the intersection of climate change, sustainable mobility, public health and equity.

In this simulation, students worked together in teams as they are faced with the challenge of managing a city through policy implementation and community engagement. In the roles of city council leaders (City Manager, Treasurer, Transportation Commissioner, Health Commissioner, Commissioner of Social Services), students had to decide which policies to implement in order to optimize the sustainable public transportation strategies to satisfy the needs of citizens in five unique districts.

"Previous simulations we have created include topics such as a Pandemic or a Refugee Crisis. This year, we developed a new simulation called the Metropolitan: A Sustainable Transit Simulation," says CLSG Director Noah Myung. "The simulations we create are not only timely, but they also challenge students to be critical thinkers, decision makers, and leaders in their society. Our experiential learning takes place in both the computer-based and the role-based portions of the simulation."

64 participating teams were evaluated on simulation scores, negotiation skills, and presentations made to their site judges, who selected seven regional winning teams. A panel of prominent Global Super Judges determined the global winners based on their simulation score, policy presentation and policy memo. The scores for the presentation and memo were based on the versatility, creativity, consideration of stakeholders, reasoning, and completeness of their policy memo and presentation. In addition to the first-place team, they determined **Second Place** to be held by five students competing at the **School of Public Policy at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.** Finally, the award for **Third-Place** will go to four students competing at **Pepperdine University School of Public Policy in Malibu, California**. Second and third place global winners will receive cash prizes from NASPAA.

Second Place Team Members

- **Natia Mikelbaia**: Georgian Institute of Public Affairs
- **Lodewijk Sebastiaan Beschoor Plug**: Delft University of Technology
- **Benedek Farkas**: Central European University
- **Sofia af Hällström**: United Nations University - MERIT
- **Rezaeva Anastasia**: Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration

Third Place Team Members

- **Bridger Langfur**: University of California San Diego
- **Victoria Williams**: Oregon State University
- **Kevan Mellendick**: Naval Postgraduate School
- **Georgina Perez**: University of La Verne

A [full list](#) of winning teams is available on the NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition website. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing many universities to temporarily convert to a virtual setting, CLSG will coordinate with academic users on utilizing this simulation for their classes immediately. Please go to www.clsgbatten.org for additional info.

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About NASPAA: *[The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration or NASPAA](#) is the global standard in public service education. It is the membership organization of graduate education programs in public policy, public affairs, public administration, and public & nonprofit management. Its over 300 members - located across the U.S. and in 24 countries around the globe - award MPA, MPP, MPAff, and similar degrees. NASPAA is the recognized global accreditor of master's degree programs in these fields.*

About the CLSG: *The University of Virginia's [Center for Leadership Simulation and Gaming](#) at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy prepares students for public life by allowing them to test real-world solutions in a virtual environment. The CLSG designs, develops and implements cutting edge simulations and experiments to advance education in leadership and public policy; conducts rigorous leadership and public policy research using simulations and experiments; and creates a community of scholarship where faculty, researchers and students are supported in their scholarly efforts related to the methodology of simulations and experiments.*