**Austin Meo**

**West Windsor-Plainsboro HS South**

**PMUNC Crisis App**

**Cabinet of the Republic of Liberia**

1. What is your past Model UN experience?

I have been doing Model UN since the fall of my freshmen year. My school has a very competitive tryout process, so I was very intimidated at my first “mock” back in 2011. Essentially a mock is a 4-day conference cut down to 8 hours on a Saturday morning in the theater of my school. There, our team officers (a group of elected seniors and juniors) provide us with a background guide and country assignments. For the whole day, we highlight every aspect of MUN from speaking and coalitioning to writing and practicing question and answer sessions. As a freshman I went to 2 conferences, PMUNC and ILMUNC, and participated in the IMF and CCPCJ committees respectively.  I earned a verbal at ILMUNC, but realized that a key to MUN was researching and preparing much harder beforehand. Sophomore year, I got out to a great start by winning an outstanding at RUMUN in SOCHUM. Following an honorable in the IMO committee at ILMUNC, I was awarded my first gavel at NAIMUN, competing in SOCHUM again focusing on human trafficking and education reform in Africa and the Middle East. Following my successes, as a sophomore I competed in a futuristic committee at WAMUNC essentially creating a new territory in the middle of Pakistan. Although I did not award, I again learned valuable lessons about preparation, but sophomore year was focused on writing and being able to express my ideas with the pen and not with my words. To start off junior year, I was a newly elected junior officer and secretary of the club. I attended WMHSMUN and competed in the directive-based crisis of the Council of Trent, winning an Outstanding. Following this, I returned to my roots at PMUNC, taking one of my favorite committees to date, Drug Trading in Rio de Janeiro. An incredible committee, I led debate by tackling tough religious meltdown in favelas as just the Minister of Health. Amidst all this, I also began an international drug smuggling operation working with 2 rival gangs shipping cocaine to entities in the Caribbean and Europe, while covering up my wealth in the secret banks of Switzerland and the Cayman Islands. At 1 AM Saturday morning, I led our military strikes on the gangs and rioters by maneuvering over 50,000 troops and preserving our title as host of the Olympics. I won best delegate at PMUNC 2013, and then moved on to ILMUNC where I won a verbal returning to the GA world, and then taking another Brazil committee in the Senate of Brazil at WAMUNC 2014. I won best delegate there, enjoying my time writing policy on new technology and planning hosting facilities for the World Cup and Olympics. I ended junior year winning an honorable at CMUNC in CSW. A much different paced committee, I learned a lot about equality and it really had a lasting impact on me, changing my views of our society. This year, I am the president of my club and am looking forward to competing against the brightest of our young generation, and can’t wait to creatively solve the pressing issues of Liberia.

2. Why are you interested in joining this committee?

I’m most interested in joining this committee after meeting a great, intelligent, young man named Abu this past year school year. As a peer leader at my school, I get to show a few new students around each year, just going on tours, getting to know them better, etc. However, when I met Abu, I realized his story was much more inspiring than anyone I had met before. He explained to me that he was the son of a diplomat in Sierra Leone, and he won a scholarship sponsored by the state department to live in New Jersey for a school year and learn in the American education system. At first, we only talked about minor things, like what was there to do for fun for kids his age back home, his favorite foods, if he liked watching soccer or football. Overtime though, we began to talk about very complex issues, such as the corruption in various governments across central Africa, and if he believed going to university in Europe would be more beneficial than traveling back to the US in a few years. I talk about this story because I have very little knowledge of Africa. My school, and for that matter most history classes across the country, ignore Africa more than any other continent in history. Slavery, the only real topic touched, barely discusses the shipping of slaves by the white man, and in most classes this lesson is a day or two max. I want to research not just about the problems and plagues that have affected Africa in recent years, but also about the future. Abu explained to me that although starvation and medicine are major issues, we should not forget all the progress being made in Africa. Many governments have reformed and begun to serve the people rather than corrupt interests. I firmly believe that I will work harder than anyone else to learn more about Liberia and Africa, and help emulate the good and continue to creatively solve the most pressing issues.

3. Do you have any prior knowledge about the topic? If so, please provide examples.

I do not have much experience researching or debating this topic but I do have a keen interest on several points. I am really interested in the transition of power since the founding of the country. I’m also curious about the emulation of the US, from the flag to its governmental influence. Are all citizens in approval? Has there been referendum regarding what way the government should go about its duties, what are the main focuses of the epidemic regarding Ebola?

4. What do you hope to get out of this committee?

I hope to learn a lot about the culture, and how Liberian government might address a topic much differently than an Asian or European country. I also believe in the concept of our generation becoming self-directed learners and collaborative team members. We as humans are stronger bonded together than fighting each other. I believe many of our disagreements can be avoided if we simply respect everyone’s cultures and work hard to support one another. I believe that learning about a government and region that I don’t know much about will help me in this journey. To be perfectly honest, I wish I knew more about Liberia. I can lie and say I have all this prior knowledge (Aka just googling it and pretending I learned all this stuff in first grade, but that’s just not who I am). So I hope to expand my knowledge and apply my creativity from Brazil crisis committees, woman’s rights committees, GA’s, and even a fictional Middle Eastern country to come up with some awesome resolutions.

5. What is your favorite word?

I’m not going to say something philosophical mainly because I don’t want you to have to read that, but my true favorite word that cheers me up is “bubbles”. I don’t know why, but it makes me smile when I am having a bad day. I have a young baby cousin and when I have nothing in my head to cheer her up if she is crying or upset, I just say bubbles and it has like a 94% success rate- and I mean that’s pretty good even for Princeton standards! Also, saying the phrase “bubbly” as in someone has a bubbly personality is so much fun. Plus only good things have bubbles in them. Soda has bubbles, and they make you feel like you’re a kid again. There’s bubble baths, bubble wrap, and just getting those big plastic rings and “making” bubbles by running with your outstretched hand waving a wand. My cousin also likes that too! Just by writing this, I have a big smile on my face and hopefully you do to.

Thanks for reading my application! Hopefully you are not too stressed out anymore and if you have any questions please let me know! Contact me via email at [Austin.Meo@gmail.com](mailto:Austin.Meo@gmail.com) or via Facebook. Have a great day!