I presented my school with my proposal of the first fully student-run Model United Nations conference to be held schoolwide for the whole Secondary department last year.

Initially, I was disappointed when the MUN was underestimated by the student body. It was only later that I realized: the students were simply worried as they had no prior experience in this field. I received numerous complaints when I announced the upcoming program to the whole school as Secretary General. Many deemed the MUN useless, “too much work” and impossible to do.

As a leader, I wanted to ensure that all team members are motivated and supported. I started having daily discussions to listen to everyone, while trying to build trust in the program. From explaining the chairing procedures, helping write speeches and case briefs to determining session materials, I also continuously praised my team members in public to build confidence—all the while giving constructive feedback in private.

After I initiated multiple workshops and preparations months before the conference date, everyone felt prepared and enjoyed the overall conference. With the newly gained support from both students and teachers who were previously doubtful, I was able to forge a strong collaboration with the English Department. As a result, everyone agrees that the MUN should be a compulsory yearly program in my school.

Shortly after the event, many team members told me that they were really grateful that they were part of the committee. One person even called it a “jail break”, as she was finally able to get over her daunting fears of public speaking which hindered her growth towards reaching her fullest potential. This year, I learned that we have many more new students applying to be part of the committee. I am happy to learn that people are now confident to join the student-run MUN, paving the way for much interest for the years to come.