

Moderator Reflection
Climate DOC 2015
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I spent my entire sophomore year talking about India. I mentioned that I'd be going on a climate change dialogue in every possible conversation, regardless of the level of relevance; I couldn't possibly hide my excitement.

One of my best friends at Northeastern, Shahd Najjar, came back from the 2014 dialogue and did nothing but rave about her experience for months. She essentially forced me to apply to the program but it didn't take much effort on her part. I've wanted to visit India my entire life and being the climate change junkie that I am, this was the perfect opportunity. Shahd highlighted the climate war games in her tales from the trip so I naturally started thinking about which sector I wanted to participate in long before I even applied to the program.

I'm a civil engineer who is obsessed with water – drinking water, wastewater, storm water, every type of water imaginable. Water has always been the one thing that continually fascinated me, even when other interests came and went. It has been my passion, my ultimate fear, and my constant source of inspiration. So in short, I wanted to be on the water team. (Sorry to break it to you, Ganguly.)

When I got the email outlying the war game teams and saw that I was going to be the moderator, I was disappointed and even a little confused. I assumed I was given the part because of my past research at the SDS lab and the experience I gained there, but I didn't think my previous exposure to climate science made me deserve such a heavy task. I was nervous that people would think I was more knowledgeable than them (when I

wasn't) and even more nervous that I would have to moderate what Shahd described to me as a "pretty heated debate."

I let the thought of me as a moderator simmer for a while and subsequently transitioned from confused and disappointed to proud. I was honored to be given the opportunity to do something I've never done before, and even more honored that I got to be on the same team as Lindsey and Kara, our student mentors and two of my most admired role models. (Side note: I believe that their confidence, intelligence, and everlasting kindness inspire everyone on this trip and everyone in their lives.)

The beginning of the war game started with some frustration from the entire group. We were jetlagged and without reliable Internet access for the beginning of the trip. Being as dedicated and nerdy as we are, the group began to stress on how the work for the war game would be completed. As the moderator, I was concerned that people wouldn't be entirely prepared and that the debate would be lacking in response. I was doing a fair amount of research in order to understand the interconnectivity between the sectors and increasingly realized the difficulty of the task. Kara and Lindsey helped me prepare immensely but stressed that most of the work would happen on the day of the war game. The different sectors emailed their PowerPoint presentations to the moderating team the night before the game, giving me only a few hours to create a summary presentation to be given after the sectors' presentations.

My alarm rang early on June 2nd and my first thought was "Crap, today's the day." I was thoroughly impressed with the sector presentations that morning and really enjoyed the effort everyone put into the game. When the sector speeches were over, I gave my summary presentation, which I thought was subpar compared to the

presentations I normally give. I think I'm a confident speaker but I found myself to be nervous on the day of the game; the summary presentation was mostly completed during the sector presentations due to the nature of the game and the alterations made to the PowerPoint slides overnight. I wish I could have practiced my summary presentation once before giving it, but I received positive feedback from my peers nonetheless.

I had a lot of fun moderating the public and private sector meetings but found myself becoming introverted during the large group debate. I was confused by the sudden change in the day's schedule and I wasn't sure how to steer the conversation during the group session. I do believe, however, that I tried my best and offered support as well as I could.

At the end of the day, the group's morale and energy were diminishing. I think my most important contribution to the game that day was my ability to keep each team motivated by helping them research and keeping their confidence levels high. I began the game as a supervisor and ended the game as a counselor and cheerleader. I was thankful to have the position to help my classmates.

I had no idea at the start of the dialogue that I would enjoy the war game as much as I did. The war game helped me learn in such an unconventional yet tangible way. My recommendations would include keeping the format of the game as it is laid out in the original directions and making more obvious the role of the moderator during the group debate (i.e. when to steer the conversation and when to be an observer). I think the moderator position would benefit from a little more structure.

If I were on the water team like I originally wanted, I might have been bored because I knew the majority of the information already. I should have figured that Dr.

Ganguly would throw me a curveball; it seems sometimes that his favorite thing to do is to thoughtfully provoke me (for which I'm very grateful).

The moderator position was certainly a challenge, but I've never been one to deny a dare. I think at the end of the day, I could've been better in terms of my confidence in my presenting skills and my participation in the group debate. I think I succeeded, however, in terms of my preparedness, thoughtfulness, and ability to engage my peers.

I am many things: a daughter, a Greek American, an outspoken student, a feminist, a Shakespeare enthusiast, an aspiring engineer. This war game helped me add another description to the list: a leader. It is for you to decide whether I was an effective one or not, but at the end of the day, against all odds, I did it.