

To whom it may concern,

I write as the Secretary General of Berkeley Model United Nations Conference ([BMUN](#)), an organization that has been doing good work for the campus and the community for 70 years and has successfully held its annual conference in the ASUC buildings. We were recently notified of increased rental fees for Student Union event spaces. Because our funding is extremely limited, I request an exception to the new fees for BMUN this year.

Berkeley Model United Nations Conferences is a student-run 501(c)3 educational non-profit organization dedicated to spreading awareness of international issues and the spirit of diplomacy through UN simulations. We also aim to create an educational experience for high school students to help them realize their potential in areas such as public speaking, research, and policy debate on difficult and timely global problems. Participating undergraduate students do this by serving as chairs for a diverse group of committees whose topics this year include *Restoring and Improving Girls's Education Post-COVID-19*, *Implications of Artificial Intelligence within the Healthcare System*, *Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems and Biodiversity*, the ongoing *Tigray Conflict*, and many more.

We feel it is critical to note that we are not a travel team. Instead, we use our conference fees to fund our conference logistics, philanthropic mission, and member development. Educational equity is a priority of ours. Many of us who have participated in model UN in high school know that this unique opportunity comes with its hefty price tag and privilege. To address this barrier to entry, BMUN's registration fees are the lowest among comparable conferences. We have also been allocating over \$10,000 annually for scholarships to ensure that students of all socioeconomic backgrounds can participate in our conference.

Thus, the new increases to room fees puts us in a precarious position. We have frozen delegate fees for nearly a decade now, and want to do everything in our power to keep it pegged at its current figure for the foreseeable future. Our logistics budget, which covers all room rental fees throughout the year, has ballooned over the past decade. Five years ago, this budget was just above \$5,000, and with the new room rental fees, we are projecting this to cost nearly \$40,000, a sum beyond our means.

The recently announced increases in fees are not sustainable for our organization. Many other university Model UN Conferences such as NAIMUN (Georgetown) and MUNUC (University of Chicago) hold their conferences off campus in hotels to avoid such costs, but we believe it is key to BMUN to hold our conference on Berkeley's campus. Here is the birthplace of Model UN 70 years ago, and the spirit of discourse in BMUN aligns closely with the history and values that this university champions. Many of our own members and applicants to the organization cite BMUN as a core reason for choosing Berkeley as the home for their undergraduate experience. If these room fees continue to increase, then we will be forced to leave campus for hotels like the aforementioned conferences. This is a lose-lose situation as we are no longer able to show

our 2,000+ delegates Berkeley's campus, and our rental expenditure will leave campus along with the participants.

Our request, in summary, is to carve out an exception for these room fee increases for our organization. We have had the most pleasant interactions in the past years with the people in Event Services as we coordinated our major events together. We are familiar with the venues and their operations, so we most certainly understand the need to cover labor and resource costs. In the name of educational equity, we hope we can work with the ASUC in ensuring that our conference remains sustainable for the students it serves, and continues to show off Berkeley's beautiful campus and culture.

Sincerely,

Annie Ren
Secretary General
Berkeley Model United Nations | The Seventieth Session
sg@bmun.org