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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2019

585 Students Around the World Compete in *Host Nations: A Refugee Simulation*

Students will confront global migration challenges during the 2019 NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition

On February 23, the third annual [NASPPA-Batten Student Simulation Competition](#) will take place, bringing together a record 585 graduate students from around the globe to tackle policy issues associated with forced migration through computer-based simulated gameplay. A partnership between the University of Virginia's Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), this year's competition will connect students from 137 universities and 27 different countries at 11 global host sites including Dhaka, Cairo, Mexico City, and San Francisco. The simulation, developed by experts at the Batten School's [Center for Leadership Simulation and Gaming \(CLSG\)](#) and backed by extensive real-world data, places students in leadership roles within a time-sensitive, fast-paced environment where they must work together to solve complex policy issues.

"We designed the *Host Nations* simulation to be challenging, exciting and educational," said CLSG Director Noah Myung. "The game was developed using real-world data on a pressing and timely issue. Participants, placed in teams, compete with other teams to select the best approaches to asylum policy in different economic and political environments, while their success is measured against specific metrics and policy objectives. Incorporating scholarly knowledge from fields as such as economics, migration studies, and systems modelling, we have created a versatile learning tool that can be deployed anywhere in the world."

Built specifically for students of public policy, *Host Nations: A Refugee Simulation* is a web-based experiential learning tool. Taking on roles such as Prime Minister, Minister of Labor, or

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Minister of Health and Human Services, players will work in teams to manage a migrant influx. Each player will be in charge of a distinct policy portfolio and the decisions they make will affect not only their own country but the other teams' as well. The game challenges participants to weigh human rights, integration, and GDP growth against budget restrictions and political resistance. Teams will be evaluated on simulation scores, negotiation skills, and presentations made to regional site judges. A panel of prominent "super judges" will determine the global winner and award \$5,000 USD in prize money.

"Simulation-based learning is an incredibly valuable tool, offering some of the most exciting, intense, and impactful learning on the planet for public affairs education," said NASPAA Executive Director Laurel McFarland. "In the classroom, our graduate students have been trained to be problem solvers, team players, and analysts— these simulations enhance students' abilities to tackle complex policy problems they may face in the real world. They'll be ready for the next influx of migrants—or for whatever crisis they might face in their public service career."

This is the fifth year NASPAA has conducted the student competition and third year partnering with CLSG to produce the simulation. Thousands of students from NASPAA's global network have participated in the competitions which each year examine a different multifaceted policy issue. For the 2018 NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition, CLSG created a public health crisis simulation in which participants battled a dangerous pandemic. Following the competition, CLSG developed a classroom version, now available for free through their website. The simulation has since been used in university classrooms in Maryland, North Dakota, and Virginia to teach important concepts about public health policy as well as critical thinking skills.

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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 14 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. For more information, please visit <https://studentcompetition.naspaa.org/>.*

About 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.*