

Intro: You are on with Career Talks presented by the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech a regular podcast featuring students, alumni, and friends of the school offering advice to help you succeed in your career endeavors.

Host: Welcome to Career Talks! A podcast service of the Academic Services Office of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech. My name is Jessica Palacios. We are talking with Plamen Mavrov, a 2nd year graduate student, who is graduating this upcoming May 2018. He is with us today to talk about his participation at the European Students Conference, a conference hosted by the European Horizons, a Transatlantic Think Tank at Yale University, where he presented on the Future of Energy. He will talk to us about the application process, the program outcome itself, the conference itself and offer advice to those interested in participating in a student conference. So let's get started Plamen, can you start by telling about yourself: where you are from, where you studied for your undergrad, what you studied and how you chose the Sam Nunn School for graduate school?

Plamen: Well first thank you Jessica for having me here today and wanting to talk with me about my recent experience at the European student conference. So a little bit about myself, I'm originally from Bulgaria I was born and raised there but I moved to the U.S. when I was young and have grown up in Georgia life. And I studied Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw Georgia where I studied International Affairs and had a second major in Political Science and a minor in Economics and currently I'm studying at the Sam Nunn School in the Masters of Science in International Affairs Program. And I'm about to conclude that this semester and I chose the Sam Nunn School for two reasons. One it was always on my radar from my undergraduate days the two institutions are very close to each other so I always knew that Tech was there and I was aware of its distinguished reputation so I knew that at some point I would likely apply there and the decision was solidified when I found out among other things that it was an APSIA member which is the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs. So I knew that that membership indicated excellence and rigor and finally the location of the school at the intersection of science and technology really appealed to my interdisciplinary inclinations and I knew that an education here would help distinguish me in the future in a career in International Affairs.

Host: We are here to talk about your presentation at the European Students Conference, where you spoke on "The Future of Energy." Can you tell us more about this?

Plamen: Certainly, the European Student Conference as you indicated in your introduction was hosted by Yale University student think tank European Horizons and it was a two-day conference in which one hundred participants from both Europe and the United States gathered together at you know to discuss various issues that are affecting the European Union today and the challenges it faces going to the future. Specifically, in the six regions of energy, technology, EU-China relations, democracy, national sovereignty, and finally security. And we went into this conference having already written papers. Within our workshops we were subdivided into particular subworkshops

and had to address specific questions within our overall themes. And so working with other students I had put together a paper that the students then ended up presenting, discussing and refining in the course of the workshops. In between the workshops we also had the privilege opportunity to hear distinguished panels of experts in the field and also be able to talk with those experts that were relevant to our particular workshop topics.

Host: How did you learn about this opportunity and why you decided to apply?

Plamen: I learned about this opportunity as I have of so many great opportunities through the Sam Nunn School's email notifications I received an e-mail that called for applications to this conference and after learning more about it and reading into it again information that was easily provided by the email that was forwarded to me by the Sam Nunn School. I definitely knew that this would be something that I would like to apply for and hopefully participate in, in large part because throughout my graduate studies Transatlantic Relations has been a central focus. Indeed, the last summer I interned in the U.S. Embassy Budapest and being before that had taken an Energy Security class that had a predominantly European and Eurasian aspect to it and so I knew that this was a continuation of that interest and of the development of my knowledge of the region.

Host: You were one of three Georgia Tech people, including two other students, one alum, and Professor Vicki Birchfield, how did it feel like to represent Georgia Tech at the conference?

Plamen: I thought very privileged that I was able to represent Georgia Tech at this prestigious conference and also be able to do so alongside other distinguished faculty, alumni, and students of the School. So it was a great experience for me and that experience I should note would not have been possible had it not been for the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence travel grant that I received from the Center for European and Transatlantic Studies here at Georgia Tech. So I'm very grateful for that and because of that I was able to join my colleagues in representing Georgia Tech at the conference.

Host: What advice would you give to students interested in such a unique experience?

Plamen: I would first advise students that they check their email as regularly as I have previously, and that I would also advise students to really apply for these opportunities. Some may seem out of reach, for instance this conference seemed out of reach for me financially wise but because I was able to reach out to our Center for European Transatlantic Studies with the help of a colleague of mine that also joined the conference I was able to find funding and as a result the opportunity was made possible for me. So definitely don't think that opportunities are out of your reach and apply for those that interest you and you believe will further your academic or career aspirations.

Host: You can participate in previous conference says including the Transatlantic Policy Symposium, where you presented papers. How do you think this will help you with your position as a Foreign Service Officer?

Plamen: Indeed and as you just mentioned I will be joining the United States Foreign Service upon graduation this year as an Economic Officer and I believe that these conferences that I've attended throughout my time here at Georgia Tech and as a Nunn School student I believe those will help me tremendously moving forward in that career especially because Europe is a region that I want to develop expertise in and also work in extensively. And these conferences that have forced me to apply my analytical skills and develop my knowledge of the region as well as present that to a wider audience. I believe will be helpful in that in that regard and in my future career.

Host: That concludes my questions is there anything you'd like to add or any concluding thoughts?

Plamen: I would just like to extend my gratitude to you again Jessica for the interviewing me today. I am very appreciative of this and I hope that this interview spurs other students to take advantage of the multiple opportunities that are regularly presented by the Nunn School and students can take advantage of. It.

Host: Well thank you for sharing with us this unique opportunity we hope to see more students participating in the future.

Outro: This has been career talks a podcast of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech brought to you by the Nunn School academic services this and other podcast can be found on our website at www.inta.gatech.edu. Thank you for listening.