

When I look back on my time here at Swarthmore, I have no doubt that the moment I got the email from Professor Tierney inviting me to join Adithi Attada ('24), Fenja Tramsen ('23), and Jacinta Fernandes-Brough ('24) in competing at the Schuman Challenge as one of the single most validating moments of my decision to attend this institution. Sponsored by the European Union Delegation to the United States, the Schuman Challenge gathers some of the brightest minds in political science and adjoining fields from the nation's foremost institutions to examine policy solutions for our world's most pressing challenges. As an aspiring national security professional, the opportunity to compete was too good to pass up, particularly given this year's prompt of addressing the security risks associated with climate change, both via mitigation and adaptation. Preparing for the challenge proved to be an invaluable experience, putting my teammates and I in the position of today's actual leaders in weighing the costs and benefits of various approaches so as to ultimately craft a proposal capable of tackling such a multidimensional problem through realistic means. Over the course of our process, we considered measures ranging from community-based peacebuilding approaches in regions of the Global South most critically endangered by climate-induced resource scarcity all the way to carbon-reducing infrastructure such as heat pumps for commercial and residential real estate both at home and in the EU. Further, through the competition itself, we were introduced to an even more diverse set of approaches to tackling the issue, ranging from protecting Antarctic krill populations to utilizing prefabricated thorium reactors in order to speed along the transition to a fully sustainable power grid. I am incredibly grateful to have had this incredible opportunity, which I believe was only made possible for me thanks to Swarthmore's unique emphasis on creating a personal and engaged classroom environment where I had the chance to get to know Professor Tierney well enough to be considered. Although our team did not place this year, I feel proud of our efforts considering that this is the first time Swarthmore has sent a delegation, and I am confident that with the lessons we learned this year, we will be well positioned to make a better account of ourselves in future iterations of the Schuman Challenge.