There are two main ways to get into the UN from School:
1. Junior Professional Officer (JPO) - 24 month contract, < 32 years old
2. Competitive Exam - indefinite length contract, for underrepresented countries, < 38 years old

Attributes that are helpful:
1. Practical experience
2. Independence and having overcome challenges - they don't want to orient or train and prefer to hire someone who can be operational from Day 1
3. Resourcefulness and ability to learn things on his/her own
4. Good drafting (writing) skills - can write fast, concise reports
5. Strong analytical skills - demonstrated by writing papers with real life application; papers that are published and can be found in google
6. Experience working in a small office of UN, instead of headquarters
7. Unique experience
8. Experience in the field, such as development in another country
9. Public speaking, negotiation, advocacy skills; speaking with confidence

Advantages of working for UN:
1. He found it rare that he has to disagree with his organization's position
2. Being able to advocate based on UN's principles

Christian offered tips for getting into the UN:
1. Go to grad school - and don't major in IR because there are so many that most don't offer a unique contribution.
2. Identify areas in a particular organization and tailor application to their needs.
3. Build field experience before applying -- need to get real life experience and been in a difficult situation in order to have "street cred."
4. Make cold calls and write to organizations. Many openings are never advertised.
5. Intern outside of the NY headquarters. You get more responsibility in the field.
6. Speak a foreign language, especially Russian and Arabic. UN languages are also helpful.
7. Try UN Volunteers.
8. It's hard to switch from G (clerical) to P (professional, jobs where you get to work on substance).
9. Apply through Galaxy from UN website even though odds are very low.
10. Get in as a consultant first (with work experience) then work your way to UN. You can find these positions in the government or with think tanks, which will push for you to join key posts in UN politics.
11. Apply early - 1 year in advance for JPO and 2-3 years in advance for the competitive exam.

Additional comments:
1. Gender-geographical balance is a factor - women from under-represented countries would have an easier time getting in. Data is published in the "composition of the secretariat."
2. You need both idealism and ability to deal with slowness, which is the reality of the political process. Manage your expectations.
3. Retirement age for UN is 62. Life expectancy of UN employee is low.
4. Compensation: Pay is good, 6 weeks off a year, tuition benefits, no income taxes.
5. You get a UN passport once you join.