



International Mountain Day Celebration at the United Nations,
December 12, 2014

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY & MOUNTAIN INITIATIVES



Utah Valley University (UVU), is the state's largest university. In 2006, the University joined the Mountain Partnership (MP) due to our dedication to the advocacy of the sustainable way of living for the mountain communities that has a lengthy heritage, dating back to Utah's first settlers in 1847.

Utah Valley University: A Student-Engaged Teaching Institution

Our university has a special mission to aid local communities, including mountain ones through teaching them how to sustain themselves economically, socially as well as in other ways. UVU is a Carnegie Foundation Teaching institution that has maintained its technical school component to provide vocational training to the local community. As such UVU was founded on the principle of community/student engagement, which helps one understand why the university is an ideal model of a mountain-communities focused institution. At UVU we prepare our graduates for graduate school and, at the same time, we give them the opportunity to learn to become school teachers, nurses, firefighters, airline pilots etc. – and improve the quality of life in their local communities, including mountain communities.

Utah Valley University & The Mountain Partnership

Given the opportunity to join the global movement advocating mountain sustainability and development, UVU without hesitation joined the MP and is very proud to contribute to the activities of that global coalition.

Utah Valley University & The UN Gender Agenda

UVU is known for advocating a strong gender agenda by hosting three international Women of the Mountain (WOM) conferences as one of the important vehicles to advance gender and the sustainable

mountain development (SMD) agenda of the United Nations, both in the Rocky Mountains and globally. We started this program in 2007, and currently we are planning the fourth WOM conference to be held next fall in Utah. UVU students will be the driving force for this conference that has been held in Peru, Kyrgyzstan, and Utah. We know our students are sufficiently capable to plan and execute this conference along with ample public/private funding to ensure its success.

For more information: <http://womenofthemountains.org/index.php/component/content/article/8-the-program/the-program/52-2015-conference>)

The Utah International Mountain Forum: A Student-Led Organization

UVU students have accomplished great achievements since creating the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) in 2011, a coalition of UVU student clubs that's main focus is to advocate the sustainable mountain agenda of the United Nations. (for more information: <http://www.utahimf.org>)

Since that time, they contributed to the agenda of the June 2012 RIO+20 UN conference held in Brazil by both contributing research to the Report on SMD in North America from the Mountain Partnership and by attending the RIO+20 gathering. In addition, UVU was the only educational institution to send students to participate at the Fourth Global Meeting of the MP in Erzurum, Turkey in September 2013, which developed strategies for the global communities in advancing SMD-activities during 2012-2017.

Contributing to the UN Open Working Group Proposal

Our university and its students contributed to the agenda of the UN Open Working Group (OWG) proposal on Sustainable Development Goals during 2013/2014. UIMF President Jesler Molina made a formal statement at the OWG about the importance of the mountain indicators before the Open Working Group on December 11, 2013.

Focus on Youth Leaders & International Mountain Day

UVU and its students also focus on two strategically important areas of raising awareness about the importance of mountain causes and mountain livelihood through:

- working with local communities in Utah and the Rocky Mountains region
- working with high school students as future leaders on these issues

In March, UVU and UIMF sponsored the fourth Utah High School Essay contest that gives high school students the opportunity to write about different topics of SMD.

Last week UVU students' hosted the fifth International Mountain Day (IMD) celebration. Every year more individuals become involved in these activities from local businesses, Non-government organizations, government leaders and community members. This year several famous individuals joined the IMD celebrations at UVU including such prominent mountaineers as Reinhold Messner and Conrad Anker.

The Future

In order to advance the SMD agenda in the future we will continue to place a special emphasis on nurturing youth as passionate and dedicated enthusiasts to mountain causes, from K-12 through higher education.

Suggested Action Item

We hope that the IMD celebrations at the UN next year will include and highlight activities that focus on youth, for example, having a special session using social networking to interact and celebrate their joint annual achievements.



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