

UVU Student Interaction with Envoy from Uzbekistan

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing." On Feb. 16, 2017 Utah Valley University was able to provide such an experience, bringing the Ambassador and permanent representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations H.E. Mr. Muzaffarbek Madrakhimov to give a lecture. The lecture addressed was on "Uzbekistan: Past, Present and Future."



Dr. Baldomero Lago, Assistant Vice President / Vice-Rector for Global Engagement at UVU Introduces Ambassador Madrakhimov to the audience

Mr. Muzaffarbek Madrakhimov began his lecture explaining Uzbek history, explaining that the country spent most of the past 200 years as part of Russia, and then as the Soviet Union before emerging as an independent nation in 1991. We were also able to learn that half of the nation Uzbekistan is under the age of 18 and that a main priority for the country was to help prepare their youth for a competitive future. Since becoming an independent country, Uzbekistan has had a steady economic growth based on exports like cotton, gas and gold. The ambassador was very proud of his nation and continued his lecture explaining how well they did in the last summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Uzbekistan won a total of 13 medals: four gold, two silver and seven bronze in the following sports: boxing, weightlifting, judo and wrestling which ranked it 21st in the world as a country.

After Mr. Madrakhimov's lecture on Uzbekistan, the floor was momentarily open for questions. I was fortunate to be able to converse my question, "What are Uzbekistan's main goals and priorities for the next 50 years?" Mr. Madrakhimov continued to explain of its importance on keeping Uzbekistan as a nation safe, especially from its neighboring countries such as

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. Moreover the country wants to see an increase in international trade and a continual growth in education for their youth.



Ambassador Madrakhimov talks to a UVU Student

Afterwards, I was able to attend a luncheon with Ambassador Madrakhimov and other colleagues. During the luncheon the ambassador elegantly shook everyone's hand and thanked us for joining him. While eating I was able to ask him on his career to becoming an Ambassador and if it was something that he always saw happening or if it was just a series of events that led him where he was now. Mr. Madrakhimov explained that it was in his final year of his Master's degree in Transportation Management when the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, in Uzbekistan was opened and he knew right away that foreign policy career was going to be something he was very interested in. "A good soldier plans to be a general" was Mr. Madrakhimov response, before the Ambassador had to leave to another event.

Ruben Garces, UVU Student